



CZECH REPUBLIC

Statement by

H.E. Mr. Jan Chvojka

Minister for Human Rights, Equal Opportunities and Legislation

at the 61st session of the Commission on the Status of Women

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Mr. Chair, Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

It is an honour and privilege to address this session of the Commission on the Status of Women on behalf of the Czech Republic. Aligning with the Maltese statement on behalf of the European Union, I reassert the commitment of the Czech government to promotion of women's empowerment and gender equality.

Advancing women's economic empowerment is essential for achieving gender equality, realising human rights and for sustainable development. The world of work is changing in many aspects. Globalization, the growth of digital connectivity and demographic changes bring about some positive developments as well as many challenges. Negative economic impacts of changing world of work lead to increased vulnerability of women, gender inequalities and increased feminization of poverty. Significant gender inequalities in the labour market remain an everyday reality of countless women around the globe.

In the Czech Republic we have seen some positive trends recently. In 2016 women made up the majority of all university students and 60 per cent of graduates. The employment rate of women is over 65 per cent and we have now more female entrepreneurs than ever before.

However, significant challenges still remain ahead of us. Czech women continue to earn by 22 per cent less than men. They face gender stereotypes in the labour market and have to overcome many obstacles before reaching decision-making positions. Lack of child-care services and flexible working arrangements are another major challenges.

However, we are aware of the remaining gaps and the Czech Republic is taking action to advance gender equality both at home and abroad. We are proud of what we have accomplished, particularly our efforts to increase women's economic participation, eliminate gender-based violence and support of families.

In 2014 the Czech Government adopted the very first Strategy for Equality of Women and Men. Following the strategy we adopted the Action plan for the prevention of

domestic and gender-based violence in 2015 and the Action plan for balanced representation of women and men in decision-making positions in 2016.

We have also implemented many important steps to support the work-life balance and eliminate the remaining gender-specific obstacles in the labour market. We have launched a project entitled “22 per cent to Equality” which aims to reduce the gender pay gap. The project will also include proposals for legislative measures to increase the transparency of wages and an online wage calculator and other tools for equal pay.

My Office is undertaking raise-awareness campaign titled “That is Equality”. The campaign aims to general public and tries to open public on two important topics – gender-based violence and participation of men in childcare. I am glad that the campaign will be introduced in our side-event organised this Friday during this session of the CSW.

Gender equality and women’s rights are also a major topics of our foreign policy and development cooperation. In January 2017 the Czech Government adopted its Action plan for the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. We are witnessing increased interest of women in army forces. In 2016 women made up more than 17 % of all soldiers in the Czech Army.

Gender mainstreaming belongs to the cross-cutting principles reflected in the Czech development cooperation and the Transition Promotion Programme. Promoting an equal and full political and public participation, including encouraging the participation of women in decision-making processes, and promoting equality and non-discrimination with a special focus on women’s empowerment and participation in public life are among our highest priorities. In 2016, projects focused on protecting women’s rights and enhancing their participation in public life were implemented in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burma/Myanmar, Egypt, Kosovo, Moldova, Nepal, Palestine, Serbia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Projects also contributed to improving health care for women in Mongolia Cambodia, Georgia, Namibia, Senegal, the Central African Republic and Zambia. In addition, Czech development cooperation has supported economic empowerment of women and prevention of gender-based

violence in Afghanistan and Serbia.

Mr. Chair, Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

I can assure you of the Czech Government's unwavering commitment to fight all forms of discrimination of women and girls over the world. We are here to cooperate with you today and the forthcoming weeks to ensure further progress.

In conclusion, allow me to invite you to our two side-events dedicated two important topics. The first side-event on the raise-awareness campaigns and political will for gender equality will be held this Friday. The second one is dedicated to digitalization, care and work-life balance and will be held next Wednesday.

Thank you for your attention.